

Name:

Mutations:

People commonly use the terms "mutant" and "mutation" to describe something undesirable or broken but mutation is not always bad. A person can have changes (or mutations) in a gene that are positive, negative or neutral. A positive mutation, for example, might help an organism to survive because they have a new ability or a new look, such as camouflage [kam-uh-flahzh]. Other changes in genes can cause health problems, such as some types of cancer. Most often, though, mutations cause changes that are neither good nor bad; they are just different.

A person can be born with gene mutations, or they can happen over a lifetime. Mutations can occur when cells are aging or have been exposed to certain chemicals or radiation. Fortunately, cells usually recognize these types of mutations and repair them by themselves.

If the gene mutation exists in egg or sperm cells, children can inherit the gene mutation from their parents. When the mutation is in every cell of the body (meaning a child was born with it), the body is not able to "repair" the gene change.

1. Are mutations bad? If yes, why? If not, why not?

2. What happens to most mutations? (Paragraph 2)